March, 1846

To the

Society of Inquiry on Missions: Princeton Theological Seminary

Dear Brethren: "Grace to you & peace from God our Father, & our Lord Jesus Christ". It becomes our duty again to address you. It is a duty we love to perform at its annual seasons. You are linked to us not only by ties of race & of country, but of religion; & still closer as brethren in the service of Jesus Christ. The ties of earth are close, but they are temporary & frail. The consanguinity with Christ is eternal in the heavens. The tenor of the letter of Jany 1845 to which this is a reply, is to exhort us to increased "faithfulness & love." We are grateful for the fraternal spirit of affection displayed. May God "impart to you some spiritual gift to the end you may be established, that we may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you & us". Our common object is missionary; may god especially give a missionary spirit to each of us, such as He had who "came down from heaven, not to do his own will but the will of him that sent him" We believe that there is more disposition manifested among us at present than during the last year to carry the true light to those who are sitting in the shadow of Death. There are several brethren who if they have not formally consecrated themselves to any particular field, yet think they are ready when God shall call to hear him & obey. How is it with you, Brethren? Our particular designation requires that Missionaries should spring from us We shall soon cease to be "Societies of Inquiry" if our inquiries do not water our individual decisions of duty. Last year we are afraid was unusually unfavourable to Missions. But few of the many young men commissioned to preach Christ, but few comparatively, ah how few compared with the demand, strove to "preach the gospel not where Christ was named lest they should build on another mans foundation". But we have hopes towards God

that the year we have entered upon may witness a revival of his work among all his people. How agreeable are the news from different portions of our country of the work of Gods Spirit among the Churches. As surely as heat radiates shall the result of this be witnessed in our cause. Periods of Spirituality are necessarily periods of Missionary zeal.

For years back the churches in this region of country have been in a state of chilling coldness. Pastors & people have been alike benumbed. But there have been indications of revival lately which we cannot help mentioning, & yet we desire to do it with proper caution. During the last Summer God heaped on us heavy temporal calamities: His fall extensive sickness & a number of striking judgements upon individuals have visited us. Yet those who love God were compelled to view a state of society rather stimulated to transgression than subdued. But many Christians were engaged in their closets wrestling in secret with Him who rewardeth openly. Lately we have seen indications that their reward may not be remote. Tract distributions present an increased interest in religion among the masses. The regular prayer meetings are filling up. & little social meetings have sprung into existence in different portions of our congregations. Particularly, the presbytery of Ohio. which met within the least few days. took the subject into deep consideration, spent an entire afternoon & evening in exercises of humiliation & prayer & adopted a report to the following effect. That the congregations within its bounds should spend the first & second weeks in February as a period of special supplication for the outpouring of Gods Spirit" the churches are to be paired off according to contiguity & both pastors spend the first week in one & the 2d in the other church. holding meetings every day. It was a profitable meeting of Presbytery. We are ardently in hope Gods blessing will attend its action. The recitations in the Seminary are to be somewhat relaxed in order that we partake in the exercises. We ask with fraternal confidence your prayers at this season. We will not forget you particularly your Senior Class. Would God that every individual of us & of your Institution might have the Spirit which was in Christ.

Would missions languish for your support then ? If that animated us, brethren, we should, like Paul, be not hindered by a contemptible bodily presence: we should not be daunted by infirmities which embattle themselves only against duty: we should, like the other apostles, not be unnerved by want of fitness & especial education, but with apostolic faith we would straightway leave our nets & follow him. Parents & friends, houses & lands, would no longer encumber. But taking our cross on our shoulders, however unshown & heavy, we should bear it gladly after Christ. O how his example should nerve our faltering limbs. The labor is but momentary, however severe, We go not out, as did our Lord, bearing it as the instrument of a painful death. The certainty of divine assistance & sympathy, the glorious use of the service, the splendour of the reward, should excite us to every sacrifice & exertion — to be made all things to all men, that we may by all means save some — to count all things but loss for the excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord May God grant brethren that the first personal acquaintance of some of us with some individuals of your number may be made in the pagodas of Lodiana, or on the banks of the Kwang Ho, that some of our dust may rise together to immortality from some benighted island in the South Pacific or that before the bar of God on that Tremendous Day we may together greet with holy rapture some band of Ottawas or Sacs, some dark tribe from the heart of Africa, some company of christianized Romanists from the pampas of Paraguay or the mountains of Brazil, converted by our common instrumentality, who shall then have risen to shine with us eternal glory through the love of Christ.

We have received during the last year several interesting communications from abroad. One particularly from Geneva which was translated & published in last June in the Presbyterian Advocate. This gave us a well written sketch of the present religious condition of Geneva & of the "new school of Theology" at the head of which are D^r^ Aubigne, Gaussen, Pilet, & La Harpe — also of the general progress of evangelical religion on the continent & of the opposition of Romanism. We might notice also letters from Rev. W. M Lowrie, A. P. Happer, &c, & make interesting extracts but it is time we should close

Will you inform us if you have had any communications with the Free Church of Scotland, in whom we feel, as we presume you do, a deep interest?

And now, brethren, we commit the general subject of this communication to your thorough, prayerful & Christian consideration. Praying that the peace of God which passeth all understanding may keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, we subscribe ourselves

Your brethren and co-workers in the blessed service of the Lord Jesus.

For the Society: William Speer
Corresponding Secretary.

West. Theol. Seminary,
Allegheny Pa.
March 1846.

(This letter was prepared in February; but could not be copied and sent in time for your March meeting. It has now not been copied by the Cor. Sec. & contains several mistakes & corrections which cannot now be amended.)